1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba



ever is certainly wrong: he gives it a circular mound, whereas the modern remains show it to have been certainly square, and so the people also say. 346

PRIESTS

In Matuku it was stated that when a priest died, after a time the spirit entered a man of that clan and that man quaked. The chief then asked the name of the spirit. They then anointed the man in the temple with yellow. Neither the priest nor the man who anointed him could touch food for four days, after which they bathed. The proceedings were compared to those for a manslayer (p. 143), only the priest was not subject to tapu. At this time the women went to fish, but were forbidden to put the fish in their baskets: they lifted the net and those who fed the priest snatched the fish and placed them alive before him. After two days a taro patch was dug about the size of a mat. In this they planted big suckers that they might not die. This was called "making free the earth." 793 775

The spirit was said to "jump on a priest," that is, to possess him. He then prophesied. If they wanted to consult the oracle they presented food to the spirit by way of entreaty, addressing him as *mbongimbongi*, that is, dawn. When people were ill an entreaty was made. When they recovered a feast was made with kava. The first cup was poured at the foot of the post, after which the people clapped; the second was drunk by the priest who was said to *rambe*, as a herald does for a chief (p. 61). 793 787

A thanksgiving offering made when people had obtained their request was called *i mandrali*. 792

When they made puddings the first one was taken to the temple; this was called *i singana* (*singana;* to put in the sun). The first of anything thus offered was so called. The term was also used of the bodies of the slain offered at the temple. It is also used of the first pudding taken to the chief.

ANCESTOR GODS

The god (*kalou*) of Navuanirewa, that is of the nobles, had no name. It was not a true god (*kalou ndina*), but an abortion, so it was spoken of as the spirit of the house (*kalau ni vale*), which was nothing but the spirits of the children that died in the house. It was spoken of as child (*ngone*) or Solosolombalavu. Its temple was Salia. 776

The *kalou* of all Katumbalevu including the nobility was Tokairambe. His temple was called Mauthori. The Mauthori branch of Katumbalevu were the priests. Tokairambe was spoken of as Thingumbob of Mauthori (*ko ka mai Mauthori*), or the god (*tevoro*) of Mauthori.

Tokairambe's body (*tolo*) was a hawk (*taiseni*). A man of Katumbalevu might not kill the hawk, or the god (*tevoro*) would kill him.

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba



776 Tui Lakemba is the god of Valelailai. Tokairambe was worshipped a little, but Tui Lakemba was greatly worshipped. He was also called Sereivalu because he unfolded war and all things. His temple was Nautuutu. An ancient, vague account relates that long ago soil was deposited there by the Tongans. Tonga and Lakemba are connected lands (*vanua vata*) on that account. This soil was brought for reasons of kinship because they have the same god (*tevoro*); it was not brought for a supplication. Roko Kilai. Taliai's eldest son, was buried on the top of the foundation of the god's temple; the soil from Tonga was underneath.

I could discover no animal belonging to Tui Lakemba; Emosi was positive the god did not enter animals. He does not always reside in Lakemba but may be absent for a year or two at a time visiting various places. He does not kill men like Likuthava.

Tokairambe was a native; Tui Lakemba came from abroad. Until the god *vu* came to Lakemba, Tui Lakemba was the title of the chief. Tui Lakemba came down from heaven; it is not known how, but probably he is Satan. It is because he came down from heaven that the people of Naitombo go to heaven when they die (p. 184), for Tui Lakemba's priest came (*vu*) from Naitombo.

Tui Lakemba was a god (*tevoro*) from Thakaundrove. He sailed from Thakaundrove and landed in Nasangalau at a little spot which lies east of the village and is called Lakemba. Before his coming the whole island was called Natuithake, that is the windward island.[27]

Likuthava belongs to Valelailai. Her house (*vale*) was called Koronivia. She was not embodied in an animal. Emosi says she was called Hurricane Skirt because women used to make skirts to avert hurricanes. Emosi makes her a sister of Tokairambe and says if the oracle was consulted she and not Tokairambe entered the priest.

776 782 If a canoe were about to sail, a feast was promised to Likuthava; upon their return, the voyagers took it to the temple (*mbure kalou*) and offered it up to the priest; they retired and the priest divided among the people of Valelailai the share presented to them; the other clans got none. The priest ate Likuthava's share. Unlike Tui Lakemba, Likuthava easily took offence (*ndau ndindi*); if she did not receive a proper share of a feast she took offence and killed some one.

776 793 If a priest died and he had a younger brother, they would discuss and say to him, "You shall drink the kava." They made kava in the temple (*mbure vakatevoro*), and then they caused to jump, so that Likuthava might enter him. If she entered him he was the priest, if she did not they tried another of the same descent and generation (*kawa vata tautauvata*). If there were an elderly son he might be chosen, but the younger brother went first. When the younger brother died they appointed the son of the elder brother. The kava in question was done in chiefly style (*vakaturanga*) because the priest used to be chief (*turanga*), being respected on account of the god; for gods used to be feared and were chiefs (*turanga*); now the priests are despised. There was a kava song which was lost when the Tongans came in the days of Rasolo.

[27] A Mualevu man told me he had heard the name Natuithake used by the old men of Mualevu.

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba



granted it; but Tui Vakano heard that Tokairambe was bound; so he went over to 539
Moala, to Vunindawa, bound the ancestor god of Moala, broke up his comb and drove him away. That is why Lakemba is not subject to Moala.

In times of drought the nobles of Tumbou formerly cut firewood and 782
took it to Vakano to be their entreaty-gift to Tui Vakano, that rain might fall.

They took it to the temple and prayed, "We have come. Grant that rain may fall. There is too much sunshine. Nothing prospers."

The priest shivered and answered, "Return, nobles of Tumbou, take horse-taro leaves as a protection for your heads." When they reached the gulley they cut a leaf and made an umbrella of it. When they were only half way to Tumbou the rain fell. They also cut firewood to get a fair wind.

Tui Vakano was embodied in a bird called *kaisevau*. If anyone threw a stone at a *kaisevau*, he fell ill and begged mercy of Tui Vakano.

## LOMALOMA

There was a female spirit in Tuvutha. 539

Tutumatua was returning along the beach from fish spearing. The woman was bathing in a spring, and her clitoris floated down as far as the sea. Tutumatua looked down and saw it; he turned it over with the butt end of his spear, and said, "This is like a hair of something edible." He followed it up and found the woman in the water, and proposed they should lie together.

The woman said, "Very well, where shall we sleep? Go and pluck leaves of some tree on land to be our bed."

Tutumatua said, "It is too long. That only is certain which is quick." He was impatient, so they had connection in the water; but his private parts, his legs, and his whole body were engulfed in her and only his head was visible. Then he entreated, "Be gracious, lady, and let me live. My entreaty gift is that I shall not again come to the spring in Tuvutha." She stood up and he fell out. There are two places Tutumatua never goes: Tuvutha and Munia. If a man does not want to go to some place they say, "He is prodding with the end of his spear."

## TOTOYA

In Vanua Vatu there is a white *kawakawa* fish. 825

It is the animal of the Two Goddesses, the "bagged fish" of the Matangi Women. They netted it in the sea and found a pool and put it in. There lives also the cooked prawn; their fish for roasting; it is ready cooked. If a man goes to sea he must take a priest with him or it will not appear. People who go to sea call out the *tama*, then sing, and the *kawakawa* and the prawn appear. It is forbidden to point at them or they will disappear. If we take the prawn into our hands it will melt; if we pour back the water in our hands there will be the prawn in the pool. There is also a snake known as the *ngata sivi*, the mother of the *kawakawa*. It cannot be touched. On the way to the place is a club, the club of Ravuravu.

## MATUKU

In Levukaindaku are two red stones above high water mark: 823

They are flood stones. When the time comes to catch palolo in Ndaku the men of Nggalivanua come and hit the stone to prevent the netting, because no palolo are caught

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara



776 The hamlet god of Nggilo (Muanaira group) was Mainggilo.

All the hamlet gods mentioned above, except Tapaso, god of Nanggara, recently introduced from Tonga, are spirits which have never lived on earth, rather than ghosts. Besides Nanggara, at least two ranking clans of the land group have ghosts rather than spirits as gods. These are Kamali (p. 111) of Mothe and Vunikoro (p. 111) of Fulanga. It is probable that through contact with the immigrants recently introduced ancestor gods have superseded the old spiritual beings of these groups. Whether all the gods of the early inhabitants were spirits is not known. It is probable, however, that the land people like many Melanesian groups, emphasized the worship of spirits rather than ghosts, while the immigrants, with their highly developed, Polynesian-like ancestor cult, worshipped ghosts almost exclusively.

778 In times of trouble such as a drought or hurricane the land people worshipped at sacred places (*na sava*) such as sacred caves (*nggara kalou*), sacred [782] stones, and sacred trees, such as the *ngingia* on Kambara. I found no evidence of the presence of god houses (*mbure kalou*, p. 112) before the advent of the chiefs' group.

The main sacred cave of the Kambara land group is the Nggara Kalou (Cave of the God), located in the bush near Undu. In the cave are conch shells sacred to the *kalou*, god of the land people. Concerning the *kalou*, Moto of Undu stated:

> The highest spiritual being of the land people was the *kalou*. He was the source of all mana and as such was worshipped by the land people. Mana was the *kalou* expressed. He was not confined to any one place. He moved about like a mist in the jungle or over the sea. He could not be touched because he had no body. He had never lived on earth nor had human form. He could be contacted most easily in Nggara Kalou (Cave of the Spirit), located near Undu in the bush. The soul (*yalo*) of the *kalou* entered the conch shells in Nggara Kalou. The priest (*mbete*) was the intermediary for the people and the *kalou* and he alone entered the Nggara Kalou. There he prayed for mana and presented offerings received from the people.

Moto's statement may be colored by Christian teachings.

Another sacred cave of the Kambara land group is called Nggara ni Tambua (literally, Cave of the Whale's Tooth). It is located in the bush between Undu and Lomatchi. Informants say that only two men now living have entered it. Its god is said to be nameless, but one of his titles is Tambua Levu. Informants say that Nggara ni Tambua is a title belonging to the island of Kambara. They explain that the whale's tooth represents wealth in Lau and before the introduction of manioc, sweet potato, and other cultivated plants, Kambara was a "cave of wealth" because her timber and fruit trees made her rich in natural resources.

There is a sacred cave on Fulanga called Ndromo ni Tambua. It belongs to the Vandravandra clan.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara



Conch shells (*ndavui*) were kept in the sacred caves. When propitiated by the priest the god entered the shells. They were then blown by the priest and the blast was considered to be the voice of the god. Moto says that when he was a young man, the land people on Kambara went with the priest to a sacred cave during a drought. After they performed a kava ceremony outside the cave the priest entered and prayed. When he blew the conch shell in the cave the people know he had contacted the god.

Offerings were formerly presented at a sacred stone called Kalou, found in the hamlet site of Toka, southwest of Naivindamu on the shore of the Fulanga lagoon. It consists of an almost cylindrical block of unworked limestone, about 60 cm. high and with a diameter of 35 cm., set on a pile of stone about 30 cm. high. The natives of Naivindamu say the stone contains mana.

Near the site of Onemata on Kambara lies a block of limestone which projects about one meter out of the ground. Here the natives say a man, who is now an ancestor god, entered the stone. The place is sacred.

## ANCESTOR WORSHIP

The ancestor cult was introduced into Lau by the group of immigrants who founded the chiefs' phratry. It has become the keynote of Lauan religion. The pattern of ranked clans of the upper class was reflected in a celestial hierarchy of ancestral gods. Ndengei, the snake god of Viti Levu, was the most powerful forefather, because he was the originator of the group. Then came the forefather gods of each noble clan in order of rank which was originally determined by success in warfare. The ancestor gods were war gods, the ghosts of famous warriors. They were propitiated to gain mana for enhancing social prestige, and their eventual rank in the celestial hierarchy depended upon their mana-bestowing powers as reflected in the successes and failures of their clans.

The concept of mana associated with the ancestor cult is strong in the native pattern of thought. According to this concept mana is the vital force or potency which gives superhuman significance to persons or things: to human beings, animals, plants or inanimate objects. Its presence in a person or thing is not attributed to power inherent in the thing itself but to some spiritual force lodging in it. The spiritual force is frequently one of the beings who peopled the superhuman world of the Lauans before the advent of Christianity. The most powerful of these beings were the ancestor gods.

The first-born of each noble clan was the temporary repository of the mana of the clan's ancestral forefathers. The chiefs had the strongest forefathers and the high chief was most sacred because theoretically he received mana from the most powerful ancestor gods.

The ancestor gods of each noble clan were incarnated in from one to three

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara



769 793 539 a feast to mark his daughter's nubility. They killed him and his daughter. At this time Niumataiwalu was at Vuna, not on Naiau. The chief of Vuna asked Niumataiwalu to carry a message to Mbau by canoe. He went to Mbau but did not go ashore with the message. At this time Andi ni Levuka, wife of the chief of Mbau, became pregnant by Niumataiwalu. She begged the chief to be allowed to go to Nairai in order to superintend the making of coconut oil. She landed in Nairai and Niumataiwalu proceeded in his canoe to Totoya, where he heard about the murder of his father and sister. The sons of Nggoma had returned to Lakemba. Niumataiwalu immediately returned to Naiau and became successor to his father. For revenge he went to Navutoka. He was met by his cousins. They fell upon each other and Nggoma and his family were killed. Now Niumataiwalu was by power and birth the successor to Nggoma, but he did not take the title of priest. He was the first *sau*, the chief of Lakemba, and the chief of Naiau.

(For a variant of this tale see Hennings, 12, pp. 33-37.)

769 793 After the coming of the chiefs' phratry, control was divided between the priests and the chiefs. Each ranking island had a principal priest clan. The title of the priest (*mbete*) descended by primogeniture from father to eldest son in the first-born line of the priest clan. The priests were the seers who directed the spiritual affairs of the group, while the chiefs were the war leaders. After the Tongan conquest and the introduction of Christianity, the power of the chiefs increased and the title of priest became honorary. First fruits were presented to the chief instead of to the priest. The priest of Mothe, who is the headman of Kamali clan, installs the chief of Mothe today. However, on Kambara and on Fulanga, the only islands visited besides Mothe where the island chief presides over more than one village, the chief is installed by the herald.

The priest had charge of the worship of a clan's ancestor gods (*kalou vu*). He was the intermediary for the people and the god. Since he was influential in securing mana from the god, he was feared and respected. He controlled the activities of the people in warfare, in times of famine, and in sickness, receiving offerings from the people and presenting them to the god according to the *sevusevu* ceremonial pattern (pp. 65-66).

● [782] Offerings were made by the people to obtain mana which would insure the success of clan activities and avoid trouble. The principal offerings were first fruits, kava, and cooked feasts, including human sacrifices. As a small offering wreaths were presented.

The priest prayed to the god, who presently took possession of him and spoke through him or revealed his will to him by means of a sign or omen. According to Fison (8, pp. 166-167), when a priest was possessed his whole body shook in convulsions and his flesh twitched. After the ceremony the priest and his clan consumed the sacred offerings.

## THE GOD HOUSE

769 778 346 Each priest had charge of a god house (*mbure kalou*), a sanctuary where the ancestor god was worshipped. It was a hut built on a high mound flanked

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara



575 jump, dance, and club one another. While in this state they receive mana in the form of inspiration from their guardians.

Each member is a specialist in some skill and has a guardian of his own whose name he bears. A creator of a new dance form receives them from the god of the dance (*meke*); a medicine man receives new medicines from the god of medicine. The membership of the cult is controlled by a god named Rayawa. When propitiated with kava, Rayawa reveals the names of new members. The man who discovers new members for the cult has Rayawa for his god.

[776 ● 782]

The leader of the cult on each island is called the originator of the bamboo (*vuninduvu*), for, as the oldest bamboo is surrounded by many shoots, so the leader is surrounded by many members. He has the strongest guardian and the most mana. Every new member must make a ceremonial offering of kava to the leader. If the leader is challenged, a contest is arranged during the Luve ni Wai rites and the member who is least vulnerable, and therefore has the most powerful god, wins and takes the leadership.

[782] Native informants say that a Luve ni Wai member occasionally propitiates his guardian by leaving a bowl of kava in the bush. When he returns, not the next day perhaps but certainly after a few days, the kava has disappeared from the bowl.

575 195 538 Informants say that in olden days Luve ni Wai members had their own idiom which could not be understood by the people. These old *meke* (chants) are difficult to translate, but, when one examines them one sees that poetic license and figures of speech rather than actual vocabulary differences set them apart from modern *meke*. However, many words which appear in the old *meke* cannot be translated by the natives today. The old Luve ni Wai *meke* are lyric poetry, highly subjective, in contrast to the more recent ones, which are definitely realistic.

575 539 The following *meke*, which are not understood by present natives, are said to be in Luve ni Wai idiom:

Nai wau (club dance) chanted by Tatchini of Kambara

(Drum beats—small *lali ni meke* type)

| | |
|---|---|
| Na vatu manawa, na vua i rama | The floating stones, the fruits of light |
| Yau talatala, vakaselotaki mana wangga | The murmuring breeze, welcoming the wonderful canoes |
| Tambu wangga ko ira na kai Mathuata, | Chiefly canoes, they are the people of Mathuata, |
| Laki kele sara i matamatana. | About to anchor at the mouth of the passage. |

(Drum beats)

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara



new channels for self-expression in medicine, in sorcery, and in secret cults such as the "Water Babies" (*Luveniwai*, literally meaning "offspring of the water").

The "Water Babies" is a colorful secret society found in parts of Fiji. It is forbidden by the government and hence most natives deny knowledge of it. The cult is not very active in southern Lau and my impression was that most natives know very little about it. It was months before anyone would discuss it with me and I did not witness any of the secret rites. I was told, however, that the cult has a few members on some of the southern islands.

To become a member of the "Water Babies" a man must have a personal guardian spirit called a water baby, which dwells in the water or in the forest. This spirit supplies him with "mana" in the form of a special talent, such as the ability to create new dances or medicines, to predict the future, or to discover new members for the cult. To obtain a guardian spirit a man goes to the bush secretly, prepares a bowl of kava and prays to the spirits. If he is successful, one of the spirits responds by entering his body and he gains special abilities. Many young men admitted that they had tried in vain to secure a guardian spirit. Only a few individuals are favored by a response from the spirit world. The ones reputed to have guardian spirits were all restless, slightly maladjusted, and frequently gifted young men. They had apparently grown dissatisfied with the monotony of modern life and were seeking superhuman outlets for their energies.

The members of the cult propitiate their guardian spirits in the bush at night. Fantastic accounts are given of these secret rites. The votaries oil their bodies and dress in ceremonial barkcloth. They sit in a kava circle and one of them prepares kava ceremonially. The first cup of kava is poured on the ground as an offering to the spirits. The men drink the remainder of the kava and call upon their spirits with prayers and songs. Finally the spirits respond and as each

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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575 enters his votary the men begin to shake and tremble violently.
776 Their flesh twitches. They begin to dance and work them-
782 selves up into a frenzy. Some club one another. In this state they are insensible to pain. Men are frequently injured and were in the past occasionally killed during these rites. While possessed they receive "mana" from their guardian spirits in the form of inspiration, each along the lines of his own specialty.

[774] The member with the most "mana" on each island is the leader of the cult. If he is challenged, a contest is held during the rites and the least vulnerable wins and takes over the leadership.

The "Water Baby" cult found its way into southern Lau from Fiji proper. Mr. Brewster, who spent forty years as a government official in Fiji, has described the cult as it appeared in the interior of Viti Levu where it was strong at the end of the nineteenth century and still practiced in the 1920's.[49]

797 The early missionaries ignored the cult. Compared to more
575 violent practices which they had to combat, such as cannibalism, widow strangling, and human sacrifice, it seemed relatively harmless except that it encouraged laziness and frequently led to bloodshed. However, when the mission had become well established in Fiji they demanded its suppression. The colonial government followed mission policy and made the practice criminal.

Mr. Brewster's comments on government policy concerning the cult are interesting. He wrote: ". . . looking down that long vista of years and after much reflection, I think that we took a wrong view of the *luveniwai*. There was no need to regard it so seriously, as in my opinion it was not really seditious. It led the boys to be cheeky and insubordinate, and to a certain amount of larceny . . . There were plenty of native regulations against insubordination, disobedience and any sort of disturbance. We did not need anything special

[49] A. B. Brewster, op. cit., pp. 222-229.

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date)1918
OQ6 Lau OQ6



coast. And Josefa told me of this, and nothing evil ever happened to him.

"But when she appears in her *waqawaqa* as the rat, all may look on her without harm, and she will even give help and strength to the people of her tribe, the men of Uruone; and they to this very day are wont to take a root of *Yaqona* as an offering to her when they are about to take part in a *tiqa*[1] match. But they can now only place their gifts on the stump of the old *ivi* tree that used to be her home, and seldom is she seen now since Apaitia, the last Tui Uruone, had that tree and also the *Makosoi* tree near to it cut down. In the old days the custom was as follows: when the people wished to honour her they would approach with all due humility to the hole beneath the *ivi* tree. Then the priests, who were always of the Na-Ivi-ki-lamo tribe, would take firewood and burn it, and the big, grey rat would appear, and running up the *Ivi* tree she would jump across to the *Makosoi*, and seated on a bough there would answer the questions put to her. Then she would descend and the priests would oil her and tend her, feeding her on the best portions of the food.

"Now, the grey rat would always appear as a warning when one of the Na Uto tribe, who are the chiefly tribe of Uruone, was about to die. But there came a time when so many of the tribe

[1] Weighted reeds thrown head first.